



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service  
1222 Woodward Street  
Orlando, Florida 32803  
407 / 648-6013  
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>



# FARM LABOR

August 21, 2000

## FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 48,000 for the week of July 9 through 15. Farmers hired 46,000 workers compared with 70,000 in April 2000 and 45,000 in July 1999. Agricultural services hired 2,000 compared with 12,000 last quarter and 3,000 a year ago. Scattered rains hindered some field activities during the survey week. Producers harvested tobacco. Some growers made the first cuts of hay with the amount limited due to the prolonged drought. Picking of oranges was virtually finished with only fresh squeezed plants remaining open. Grove caretakers cut cover crops, applied

herbicides and other sprays, fertilized, hedged, topped trees, and removed grove debris.

The July 2000 all hired workers wage rate averaged \$8.49 per hour, four cents below the \$8.53 per hour paid last quarter, but 13 cents above the \$8.36 paid last year. Farmers paid an average of \$8.47 per hour, six cents below the \$8.53 paid last quarter, but fifteen cents more than the \$8.32 paid last year. Agricultural services paid workers an average of \$9.00 per hour compared with \$8.50 paid last quarter and \$8.85 paid last year.

## UNITED STATES

There were 1.37 million hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches during the week of July 9-15, 2000, down 7 percent from a year ago. There were 1.08 million workers hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 289,000 workers. Migrant workers accounted for 11.1 percent of the July hired workforce compared to 12.4 percent last year.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage rate of \$7.89 per hour during the July 2000 survey week, up 31 cents from a year earlier. Field Workers received an average of \$7.32 per hour, up 27 cents from last July. Livestock Workers earned \$7.65 per hour compared with \$7.22 a year earlier. The Field and Livestock Workers combined wage rate was up 31 cents from last year.

Number of hours worked averaged 40.2 hours for hired workers during the survey week compared with 40.5 hours a year ago.

The largest increases in number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Northeast I (New England and New York), and Mountain I (Idaho, Montana and Wyoming) regions. In the Southern Plains region, the largest increases in hired workers occurred on beef cattle operations. Ranchers were busy moving cattle to available stock water facilities because of hot, dry weather which prevailed across most of the region during the survey week. In Northeast I, major farm activities included harvesting vegetables, berries, and hay; cultivating; and spraying potatoes. In addition, some corn and dry bean plantings were finishing up due to wet weather during the planting season. In the Mountain I region, above normal temperatures, combined with little to no precipitation,

created ideal conditions for harvesting hay, irrigating, and spraying for weeds. Farmers were also busy harvesting winter wheat in some areas of the region.

The largest declines in number of hired farm workers from a year ago occurred in the Northern Plains (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas), California, Mountain II (Colorado, Nevada, and Utah), and Lake (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) regions. In the Northern Plains region, winter wheat harvest was completed in most areas of Kansas and Nebraska. Spring wheat harvest was at or near completion in the Dakotas. In California, vegetable and melon harvest was two weeks ahead of schedule because of warmer weather earlier in the growing season. Fresh grape harvest was reported near completion in most areas compared to last year's reference week when harvest was active. Hot, dry weather in Mountain II continued to hamper field activities. In the Lake region, winter wheat and oat harvest was just getting started.

Hired farm worker wage rates were above a year ago in most regions. The largest increases occurred in the Southern Plains, Mountain I, and Mountain II regions. An increasingly competitive economic environment, coupled with a need to attract more skilled farm labor, continued to push hired farm wage rates higher in the above regions and nationwide.

### Revisions:

The April 2000 hired workers estimates were revised for the U.S. and California. These revisions were based on additional information received in California as part of the ongoing Federal-State cooperative program.

**Table 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, July 9 - 15, 2000, with comparisons**

Employer, Year, and survey week		Hired by farm operators						
		Number of workers			Hours Worked Per Week	Wages Paid by Type of Work		
		All	Expected to work			All	Field	Livestock
			150 days or more	149 days or less				
HIRED BY FARMERS								
2000		Thousands			Hours	Dollars Per Hour <sup>1/</sup>		
	July 9 - 15	46.0	42.0	4.0	42.0	8.47	7.75	7.45
	April 9 - 15	70.0	62.0	8.0	*40.4	*8.53	7.70	7.80
	January 9 - 15	60.0	48.0	12.0	41.9	8.28	7.40	7.50
1999								
	October 10 - 16	58.0	47.0	11.0	38.8	8.05	7.05	7.00
	July 11 - 17	45.0	40.0	5.0	39.7	8.32	7.25	7.30
	April 11 - 17	54.0	46.0	8.0	41.1	8.18	7.40	6.90
	January 10 - 16	55.0	48.0	7.0	39.1	8.31	7.35	7.00
1998								
	October 11 - 17	47.0	42.0	5.0	43.0	7.82	7.10	7.30
	July 12 - 18	45.0	40.0	5.0	41.5	8.08	7.25	6.90
HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2000								
	July 9 - 15	2.0			43.0	9.00		
	April 9 - 15	12.0			36.5	8.50		
	January 9 - 15	16.0			36.5	8.60		
1999								
	October 10 - 16	5.0			32.0	8.65		
	July 11 - 17	3.0			45.0	8.85		
	April 11 - 17	9.0			38.0	8.30		
	January 10 - 16	12.0			35.0	8.50		
1998								
	October 11 - 17	6.0			30.0	8.05		
	July 12 - 18	5.0			32.0	8.60		
HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS & AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2000								
	July 9 -15	48.0				8.49		
	April 9 - 15	82.0				8.53		
	January 9 - 15	76.0				8.34		
1999								
	October 10 - 16	63.0				8.09		
	July 11 - 17	48.0				8.36		
	April 11 - 17	63.0				8.20		
	January 10 - 16	67.0				8.34		
1998								
	October 11 - 17	53.0				7.84		
	July 12 - 18	50.0				8.12		

<sup>1/</sup> Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates. \*Revised.

**Table 2 -- Number of workers hired by farmers, wage rates, and hours worked,  
selected States, July 9 - 15, 2000, with comparisons <sup>1/</sup>**

Item	Florida	California	Texas & Oklahoma	Arizona & New Mexico	Hawaii	United States <sup>2/</sup>
Thousands						
<b>All hired workers</b>						
<b>July 9 - 15, 2000</b>	46	261	77	20	8	1,079
April 9 - 15, 2000	70	*239	63	15	7	*840
<b>July 11 - 17, 1999</b>	45	322	60	19	8	1,155
<b>Expected to work</b>						
<b>150 days or less</b>						
<b>July 9 - 15, 2000</b>	42	202	51	16	7	722
April 9 - 15, 2000	62	*184	41	13	6	*633
<b>July 11 - 17, 1999</b>	40	241	39	15	7	760
<b>149 days or less</b>						
<b>July 9 - 15, 2000</b>	4	59	26	4	1	357
April 9 - 15, 2000	8	*55	22	2	1	*207
<b>July 11 - 17, 1999</b>	5	81	21	4	1	395
Dollars per hour <sup>3/</sup>						
<b>All hired worker wage rate</b>						
<b>July 9 - 15, 2000</b>	8.47	7.99	7.38	7.30	10.76	7.89
April 9 - 15, 2000	*8.53	*8.29	7.47	7.30	10.58	*8.09
<b>July 11 - 17, 1999</b>	8.32	7.77	6.60	7.17	10.88	7.58
<b>Wages by type of worker</b>						
<b>Field &amp; Livestock</b>						
<b>July 9 - 15, 2000</b>	7.70	7.38	6.85	6.63	9.09	7.39
April 9 - 15, 2000	7.71	*7.70	7.12	6.68	9.14	*7.55
<b>July 11 - 17, 1999</b>	7.26	7.22	6.26	6.56	9.53	7.08
<b>Field</b>						
<b>July 9 - 15, 2000</b>	7.75	7.29	6.56	6.43	9.17	7.32
April 9 - 15, 2000	7.70	*7.64	6.90	6.71	9.19	*7.54
<b>July 11 - 17, 1999</b>	7.25	7.15	6.23	6.52	9.51	7.05
<b>Livestock</b>						
<b>July 9 - 15, 2000</b>	7.45	8.10	7.55	7.17	<sup>4/</sup>	7.65
April 9 - 15, 2000	7.80	*8.37	7.48	6.53	<sup>4/</sup>	*7.58
<b>July 11 - 17, 1999</b>	7.30	8.05	6.40	6.68	<sup>4/</sup>	7.22
Average hours per week						
<b>Hours worked by all hired workers</b>						
<b>July 9 - 15, 2000</b>	42.0	44.8	39.9	46.6	36.7	40.2
April 9 - 15, 2000	*40.4	*44.6	37.4	50.7	37.1	40.4
<b>July 11 - 17, 1999</b>	39.7	46.9	40.3	47.2	37.4	40.5

<sup>1/</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service workers. <sup>2/</sup> United States excludes Alaska. <sup>3/</sup> Value of any perquisites provided are not included in wage rates. <sup>4/</sup> Insufficient data for this category; included in all hired wages. \*Revised.

## RELIABILITY OF FARM LABOR ESTIMATES

**Survey Procedures:** These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of July using sampling procedures to ensure every employer of agricultural workers had a chance of being selected.

Two samples of farm operators are selected. First, NASS maintains a list of farms that hire farm workers. Farms on this list are classified by size and type. Those expected to employ large numbers of workers are selected with greater frequency than those hiring few or no workers. A second sample consists of segments of land scientifically selected from an area sampling frame. Each June, highly trained interviewers locate each selected land segment and identify every farm operating land within the sample segment's boundaries. The names of farms found in these area segments are matched against the NASS list of farms; those not found on the list are included in the labor survey sample to represent all farms. This methodology is known as multiple frame sampling, with an area sample used to measure the incompleteness of the list. Additionally, a list of agricultural service firms was sampled in California and Florida. The survey reference week was July 9-15, 2000.

**Reliability:** Two types of errors, sampling and nonsampling, are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both types affect the "precision" of the estimates. Sampling error occurs because a complete census is not taken. The sampling error measures the variation in estimates from the average of all possible samples. An estimate of 100 with a sampling error of 1 would mean that chances are 19 out of 20 that the estimates from all possible samples averaged together would be between 98 and 102; which is the survey estimate, plus or minus two times the sampling error. The sampling error expressed as a percent of the estimate is called the relative sampling error. The relative sampling error for number of hired workers at the U.S. level was 2.9 percent. The relative sampling error for the number of hired workers generally ranged between 9 and 23 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 0.8 percent. The relative sampling error was 0.8 percent for the combined field and livestock worker wage rate.

Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 2 and 8 percent at the regional level. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm ranged between 2 and 18 percent at the regional level.

Nonsampling errors can occur in a complete census as well as in sample surveys. They are caused by the inability to obtain correct information from each operation sampled, differences in interpreting questions or definitions, and mistakes in editing, coding, or processing the data. Special efforts are taken at each step of the survey to minimize nonsampling errors.

**Revision Policy:** Farm labor information is subject to revision the next time the information is published or the year after the original publication date. The basis for revision must be supported by additional data that directly affect the level of the estimate. Worker numbers and wage rates for July 1999 and April 2000 were subject to revision with this report. Revisions were made and previous data are reprinted in this report for your information.

The November 17th report will have information for the survey week of October 8-14, 2000. The report will include the number of All Hired Workers, Average Hours Worked by Hired Workers and the All Hired Worker Wage Rates at the regional and U.S. levels. The wage rate for field, livestock, and combined field and livestock workers will also be available at the regional and U.S. level. The number of Agricultural Service Workers and the corresponding wage rates will be published for California and Florida.

The report will also contain annual averages for Self employed, Unpaid, and All Hired workers at the U.S. and regional levels and for selected states. All Hired Hours Worked will also be published for the U.S., regions, and selected states. Annual average wage rates will be published for the U.S., regions, and by State for Field, Field and Livestock combined, and All Hired workers.

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National Agricultural Statistics Service  
1222 Woodward Street, Orlando, Florida 32803

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